

BRISTOL WARREN REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

WORKSHOP

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2007

The monthly workshop of the Bristol Warren Regional School Committee was held in the Cafeteria of Rockwell School, 1225 Hope Street, Bristol, RI, on Monday, February 12, 2007. The Chairperson, William A. Estrella, Jr, called the meeting to order at approximately 7:03 PM.

Present: William A. Estrella, Jr., Marjorie J. McBride, William M. O'Dell, Paul Silva, Paul E. Brule, Diana B. Campbell and John P. Saviano; Edward P. Mara, Superintendent; and Melinda L. Thies, Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction; and Mary Cerullo, Executive Director of Literacy, K-12, Elementary Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

Absent: Joyce M. Kinsella

DISCUSSIONS

Fourth of July Carnival on Guiteras Field

The Bristol Fourth of July Committee had approached the

Budget/Facilities Subcommittee about putting the carnival on Guiteras Field because the concerts that are usually held on the Colt lawn will be on the Common due to the construction at Colt. Mr. Nat Squatrito said they have met with the Town Administrator, Director of Parks and the carnival owner about alternative locations (town beach, Colt Park) and Guiteras Field was decided upon. In response to questions from the Committee Mr. Squatrito said that youth sport functions held on the field can be temporarily relocated while the carnival is in town, and the carnival owners have \$5M insurance and a damage deposit of \$2000 is given up front. Mr. Pugh raised concerns for protection of the District's investment in maintaining the field as well as protection of the infield. Mr. Estrella directed the Superintendent to put in writing to the Fourth of July Committee, approval to use the Guiteras Field for the carnival with the following stipulations: the damage deposit be increased to \$7000, the infield be protected, that our staff assess the condition of the field after the close of the carnival, that The Trust review the insurance policy, and that Attorney Henneous review the agreement.

Guiteras Fence

About two years ago the Committee decided to leave the Guiteras Field gate unlocked twenty-four hours a day, to allow the public unlimited access to the field. Because of some complaints from the neighbors and inappropriate late night activities, consensus of the Committee was to lock the gate during nighttime hours. Regarding the goose issue, the geese are gone because of the cold weather.

Mt. Hope High School Program of Studies

Mr. Estrella thanked the Mt. Hope Principal and Director of Guidance for presenting the Program of Studies for School Committee review in a timely manner. Almost all the department heads were present to answer questions. Mr. Michael Monahan described this year's changes. The most significant change is the linking of courses to the Grade Span Expectations in keeping with the new RI diploma system. Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirements (PBGR's) have been incorporated with the traditional Carnegie Unit requirements, which remain at 24. All PBGR's are state-mandated; they are embedded in coursework and must be met for students to be prepared for college or work. School wide rubrics are used as measurements. Mr. Estrella strongly stressed the necessity for parents to be actively involved in their student's high school experience and especially selection of courses. Mr. Monahan said several workshops are offered to parents about portfolios, following their student's progress, and reviewing completed and uncompleted requirements. A new initiative, Individual Learning Plans, is in place to help each student set their goals and map out the steps necessary to meet their goals.

Six Advance Placement courses will be offered; four years ago there was one. Mrs. McBride announced to the high school staff, the Budget/Facilities Subcommittee intends to give the high school the

option of adding two more AP courses, and asked the faculty to discuss this option; the Committee would like to ramp up the AP courses over the next few years. Mr. O'Dell asked about the fee to take the AP test; if students cannot afford the fee, the school will help out; Mrs. McBride said the Journal reported the State has set aside a significant amount of money for this purpose.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Monahan said that students, on a case-by-case basis, are concurrently enrolled in various colleges; such a relationship with Roger Williams University is being developed. The guidance staff tries to meet with every student one-on-one, but sometimes they meet with an entire classroom; needy students are seen more often; there is an advisory program they are trying to make more effective; they communicate with the eighth grade teachers to prevent ninth graders from getting lost in the shuffle.

Family and Consumer Science Department Head, Ms. Laurel Thayer, explained that Prostart I and II, which proved too intense, are replaced by Food Service and Hospitality to prepare students to take the food service certification course, which, if there is sufficient interest, would be offered.

Ms. Jean Molicone, Math Department Head, said the Math Department offers one early enrollment course with RIC, which is calculus.

Mr. Monahan, responding for the Science Department Head, said students were struggling with biology so they are making gradual changes and offering Integrated General Science in place of Physical Science for eighth grade alignment.

Ms. Campbell suggested the Computer Graphics Course be renamed Graphic Arts in order to attract more students.

Mr. Saviano asked what is being done to address the dropout rate and make the students want to stay in school. Mr. Monahan said they have spent significant time studying the dropout statistics—differentiated instruction is the key to keeping students engaged and show relatedness to the next course. Teachers need to understand they must reach all students. Proper course selection is also critical.

Mr. Silva commented on how I-Parent is a wonderful tool for parents to be involved and thanked the staff. Mr. Estrella reiterated the importance of parent involvement and he thanked the staff for their great amount of work and fine presentation. Mr. Dugan was very impressed with the number and quality of the course offerings.

Mr. O'Dell asked if there has been any debate on the fate of a student who may do very poorly in the first two quarters, then turn around and do very well in the second semester. Mr. Monahan responded this issue is under debate and each case is taken individually.

In response to Mr. O'Dell, Mr. Robert Arsenault said every band student knows from the beginning they are expected to march; students are graded for marching performances and attendance which is averaged into their Concert Band or Symphonic Band grade. Only cheerleaders and football players are excused from participation in a field show but must participate in parades; other students with legitimate activities on Saturday or Sunday are treated individually.

Dr. Mara also emphasized parent involvement; students will be receiving a Board of Regents Diploma and this is not the same old diploma system. He pleaded with parents to be involved – dropout and graduation rate is a community issue. He thanked the high school leadership team and administrators for the work they have done to bring this high school to where it is today.

2007-2008 Budget Review

Mr. Estrella said a special School Committee meeting will be held at the request of the Budget/Facilities Subcommittee on February 28th at 7:00 PM for budget discussion. The final Subcommittee meeting before action by the full Committee is on Monday, February 19th at 6:00 PM.

Voices for Bristol's Future

Ms. Diana Campbell said a forum is scheduled for March 2nd and 3rd at Mt. Hope High School, where 150 people, representing a broad spectrum of citizens, will reflect on what they like and how they want the Town to move forward. Joyce Kinsella, as Chair of the Policy/Community Affairs Subcommittee, will represent the School Committee.

SUPERINTENDENT'S ISSUES/UPDATES

Dr. Mara had nothing further to report at this time.

CHAIRPERSON'S INITIATIVES

Mr. Estrella reported a very productive discussion on School Committee goals was lead by Mrs. McBride. He has taken the initiative to hold Workshops at different schools to showcase the facilities; also to see the Mt. Hope Home Building Project on 3 Jefferson Lane. Students will be moving and renovating a house and taking down a garage; anyone interested is welcome to bid on the house. Mr. Estrella reminded the Committee and public that the Budget Meeting on Monday, February 19th is very important, as is the meeting on February 28th.

SUBCOMMITTEE ISSUES AND UPDATES

All pertinent items were mentioned previously in this meeting.

ADJOURNMENT – 8:15 PM

There being no further business to discuss, Mr. Saviano, seconded by Mrs. McBride, motioned to adjourn at 8:15 PM. The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Silva, Secretary

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